

MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST

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Serving Nature & You



Vantage Point

Little Things that Make a Big Difference

I spend a lot of time around people with big ideas about needed changes to our conservation landscape. It can be very motivating and frequently causes me to think some big thoughts of my own. I must admit, however, when fall arrives in Missouri and the crispness hits the air, I find myself consumed by the little things that happen around me.

It's been fun to watch the songbirds and woodpeckers hit the bird feeders in search of a more substantial meal. After a brief but colorful display, the trees on our property responded well to a fall trim, which is my annual signal to pull the holiday decorations out of storage. I also enjoyed a few stolen moments outdoors with kids and grandkids that will add some fun photos to the family album.

On the work front, much is happening, but three smaller things from the past month stand out as most memorable.

I had the pleasure of administering the oath of office to 19 eager conservation professionals upon their graduation from the 2006 Conservation Agents Academy. My official role in the ceremony was small, but moving. Staring into their determined faces, I had little doubt these men and women would do many big things to positively impact their communities and the fish, forest and wildlife resources entrusted to their care. The event inspired a reflection upon my years as an agent and the passion I felt when taking the same oath 29 years ago.

Our annual Endangered Species Walk/Run to benefit species of concern was enhanced by a kids' contest to design lapel buttons featuring plants or animals that live in glade habitats. It started as a small idea from a Department education consultant that turned into a big surprise when over 600 entries flooded Jefferson City. I was reminded once again of the power harnessed within our youth if we give them the outlet to learn about our natural world.



These Missouri children showed their enthusiasm for art and conservation by participating in the Endangered Species Walk/Run button contest.

Finally, I read with fondness the eulogy delivered at the recent funeral of Phil Rice, a Department employee that I long admired. His conservation career began upon his return from World War II and spanned five decades. His initial decision to accept employment with the Department was complicated by one small thing—he didn't have a car available to go to work! Thank goodness that small hurdle was overcome because he went on to participate in some of the greatest wildlife recoveries of all time.

Each fall day, Missouri hands us at least one thing to enjoy if we just take the time to see it and appreciate the gift. I encourage you to get outside with your family and enjoy your own backyard or one of the many conservation areas or other special places available throughout the state. Sharing outdoor experiences is a great way to strengthen relationships with those most dear to us without the distractions and pressures of other responsibilities. As we enter this season of thanks, I am grateful these small and large treasures abound.

John Hoskins, director, Missouri Department of Conservation



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Tear out this month's insert of our children's magazine on ducks and mussels!



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Reflections

CORMORANT CONFUSION

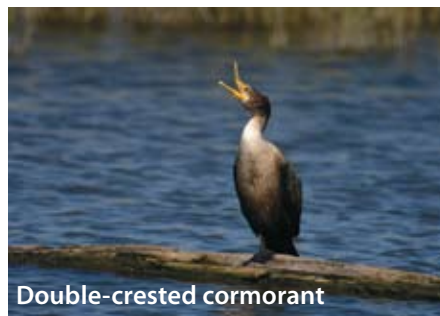
In your August 2006 issue, on page 17 [*Birds of a feather...*], you had a photo of birds roosting in a tree at sunset. They look like ducks or geese, but I have never seen those roosting in a tree. I loved the photo, but can you tell me what kind of bird it is?

Terry Reynolds, via Internet

Editor's note: The birds in the photo are double-crested cormorants. They are colonial waterbirds commonly found in Missouri wetlands. However, some ducks, such as wood ducks, also perch in trees. To learn more about double-crested cormorants check out these Web sites: www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/Infocenter/i1200id.html or web1.audubon.org/waterbirds/species.php?speciesCode=doucor&tab=natHistory.

STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT GEN

I am retired from a Fortune 100 company. While there, I had the opportu-



Double-crested cormorant

nity to participate in their long-range strategic planning process. I know that this is hard work. I want to compliment you on the fine job you have done for the citizens of Missouri [*The Next Generation of Conservation*, September 2006 issue]. Good work and great results!

Ben Janson, St. Louis

I would like to make one comment on page 13 of the September 2006 issue. Your goals are very commendable, but I would like to suggest that more emphasis be put on not littering.

Kathleen Paulis, Lincoln

FOR BETTER PICKER-UPPERS

Great job with the littering policy! I've spent years picking up soda/beer cans and bait wrappers, etc., and I am ecstatic that there will be a penalty paid by those littering. I hope that you have a mechanism to get the word out so we can keep our state beautiful.

Rick Nadler, Gray Summit

Editor's note: For more information on Missouri's first statewide anti-litter campaign, visit www.missouri-conservation.org/nomoretrash, or write to No MOre Trash!, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

68 YEARS YOUNG

What year was the first issue of the *Missouri Conservationist* published?

Elijah Wilson, Excelsior Springs

Editor's note: The Missouri Conservationist began as a quarterly newsletter on July 1, 1938. On the first run, 10,000 copies were published. For details on Missouri Department of Conservation history, you may find this site helpful: www.missouri-conservation.org/about/50_yrs/.

SURVEY SAYS

I just filled out the survey regarding the *Missouri Conservationist* and could not pass up the opportunity to thank you for a great and worthwhile publication. My wife and I take care of our 7-year-old grandson while his mother works, and those [our] responses also reflect his interest in the articles. It not only provides interest in the outdoors, animals and "bugs"—he learned to read (with our help) via the *Conservationist*.

Beverly Cole, via Internet

Editor's note: In May, the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Institute of Public Policy in the University of Missouri Harry S Truman School of Public Affairs, conducted a survey of Missouri



NIGHT LIGHT

During a break from training recruits at Fort Leonard Wood this summer, SFC Heath Kitchen from Virginia and SFC Dwight LaPorte from Rhode Island explored an unnamed cave on base. Inside, they found this festively colored cave salamander brightening the twilight. Cave salamanders (*Eurycea lucifuga*) range from 4 to 6 inches long and are usually bright orange, but may be more red or yellow. They are found throughout most of the southern half of Missouri in caves and other moist environments.

Conservationist readers. Participants were chosen at random and asked to comment on such topics as overall satisfaction with the publication's topics, accuracy, quality and effectiveness; ideas for possible inclusion in future issues; the types of activities they enjoy, and more. We'd like to thank everyone who participated in the survey, and we look forward to using your responses to shape future issues of the Conservationist.

ENCORE PERFORMANCE

It was great seeing Joel Vance back inside the covers of the *Conservationist* with his article *The Seven-Year Night*.

The letters printed here reflect readers' opinions about the Conservationist and its contents. Space limitations prevent us from printing all letters, but we welcome signed comments from our readers. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Ask the Ombudsman



Q: In the February issue of the *Conservationist* magazine, I saw that there is a furbearer called nutria. What exactly is a nutria?

A: Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) are native to South America. If you can imagine a muskrat/beaver cross, that's a pretty good likeness of this animal.

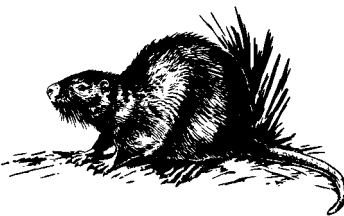
Nutria were brought to the U.S. back in the 1930s when fur farming was big business. Unfortunately, some of them escaped to the wild. They have since adapted and done well where they were originally held in captivity—Louisiana and the Pacific Northwest. Louisiana has tried to reduce nutria numbers due to the destruction they cause to that state's coastline.

Over the years, nutria have slowly moved northward, and occasionally a trapper in south Missouri will take one. Nutria were added to the *Wildlife Code* in order to allow trappers to legally take and sell them.

For more information about nutria, go to www.nutria.com/site.php.

For more information about Missouri furbearers and hunting and trapping, please go to www.missouriconservation.org/hunt/.

Ombudsman Ken Drenon will respond to your questions, suggestions or complaints concerning Conservation Department programs. Write him at P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, call him at 573/522-4115, ext. 3848, or e-mail him at Ken.Drenon@mdc.mo.gov.



Who better to write about the Department's success story than the man who for years captured the very spirit of the outdoors with his wonderful work.

Tom Karl, Farmington

PLACES & FACES OF MO

The most recent issue [September 2006] of the *Missouri Conservationist* arrived today. The cover photo of the two wholesome young people was excellent. The natural beauty of Missouri is a heritage for all our citizens. Thanks for providing the best Missouri resident fringe benefit!

Bob Bailey, Fulton

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Agent of Change

by Francis Skalicky

JIM RATHERT

After 50 years with the Missouri Department of Conservation, Carl Engelbrecht knows conservation—and a whole lot more.

Nearly a half-century of duty as a Missouri conservation agent has not dimmed Carl Engelbrecht's memory of one of his early enforcement challenges.

"Right here is where they were, and over there is where they were shooting at," he said, pointing to an area overgrown with vegetation. The story that followed recounted the day when Engelbrecht, then a young Newton County conservation agent, foiled a large-scale attempt at road hunting.

A local businessman had told a number of his patrons that they could drive to his farm and shoot deer from the comfort of their own vehicles. Many of those would-be hunters quickly found out that there's no room for negotiation when the topic is flouting the state's hunting regulations.

"I unloaded 117 rifles that day and told those folks that they had to go back on the land if they wanted to hunt. I told them they couldn't shoot from the road," he said. "I wasn't a very popular person that day."

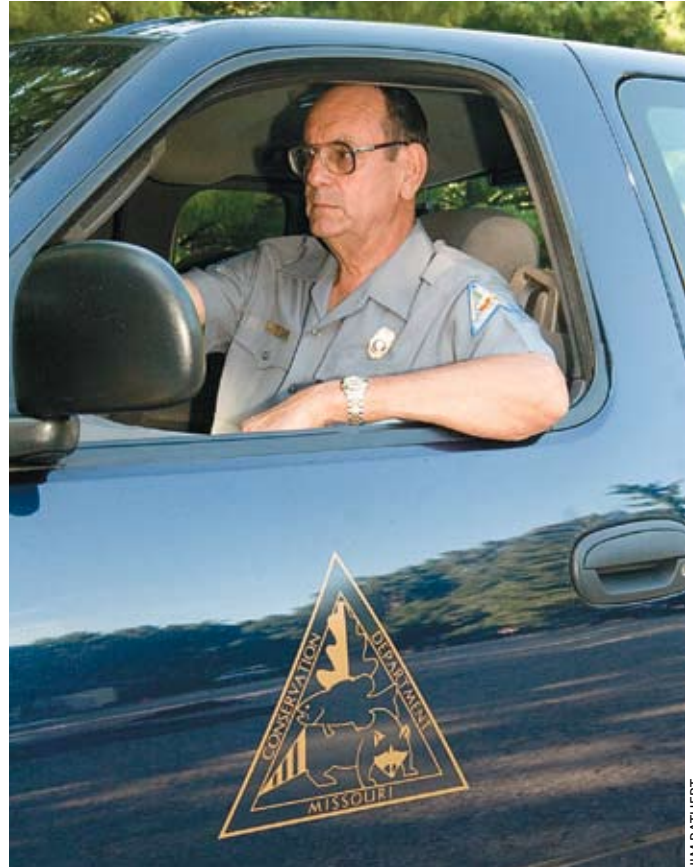
Of course, the scene was hard to picture today, as none of the features of the site matched the details Engelbrecht described. He spoke of cars being parked on a gravel road, yet the road he was referring to was paved. He told how people were shooting deer in a field, but the "field" he pointed to was so choked with brush and mature trees that it would be difficult to see whitetails there—let alone shoot them.

The landscape has changed significantly in the 50 years Engelbrecht has been with the Department of Conservation. Of course, so has the Department.

A dedicated man

Most of those five decades with the agency have been in Newton County, in the southwest corner of the state. After part-time employment with the Department in the early 1950s, his career got its official start in 1956 when he took a full-time job as a dispatcher in the Conservation Department's Camdenton office. In 1959, the Cole County native became the conservation agent for Newton County.

Today, few Newton County residents recall that Randolph Mason was their conservation agent in the early 1950s or that McDonald County Conservation Agent Fred Drummond held the position prior to Engelbrecht's arrival. For most county residents, Engelbrecht has been the face of conservation for as long as they can remember.



JIM RATHERT

Conservation Agent Carl Engelbrecht has been the face of conservation for Newton County residents since 1959.

"Carl was conservation in this area before we knew what the word 'conservation' meant," said Newton County Prosecuting Attorney Scott Watson. "It's always nice to deal with someone who's forgotten more about a subject than I'll ever know."

"Carl has always been devoted to the state, to the Conservation Department, and to his job," said retired Newton County Sheriff Joe Abramovitz. "I don't know any conservation agent that's more devoted to his job than Carl. I think he gets better as he gets older."

Dark-haired, and with a sturdy 6-foot-4 frame, Engelbrecht shows few outward signs of turning 69. However, when he talks of past experiences, his veteran status becomes clear.

Engelbrecht recalls, for example, the programs he did for 33 one-room rural schools in the Newton County area—none of which are in existence today. He describes the conversations he had with his supervisor, "when I could get through," on his state-issued 12-watt radio that had two frequencies. (Today's conservation agents



Carl Engelbrecht received a longevity award from the governor's office for his five decades of service to the state.

converse on 110-watt radios that have more than 250 frequencies and can interface with city, county and state law enforcement agencies.) And he talks of local restaurants being packed with hunters on the opening day of quail season. "Today, you're lucky if you walk a long way and find one quail hunter," he said in a wistful tone.

Adjusting to adjusting

Engelbrecht's duties—and the tools agents use to enforce regulations—have changed greatly since he first donned his uniform. Today's Protection Division of the Missouri Department of Conservation includes approximately 200 agents who work in Missouri's 114 counties. Their duties include educating Missourians of all ages about the importance of conservation.

A job that once focused solely on enforcing Missouri's fishing and hunting laws now includes duties such as eliminating meth labs on Department areas and providing assistance to city, county and state law officials with investigations of crimes that occur on

state-owned land. Conservation agents use global positioning systems, night-vision optical equipment, electronic metal detectors, radio-controlled wildlife decoys, laptop computers and a variety of other state-of-the-art technological devices to assist them in their duties.

Before beginning their job in the field, new conservation agents must complete six months of training in Jefferson City. However, education and testing will continue throughout their careers. Conservation agents must take part in physical fitness testing and meet Protection Division fitness standards twice a year. They

also must take part in firearms qualification three times a year. They must receive first responder/CPR certification annually. In addition, each agent must complete at least 42 hours of Peace Officer Standards Training (P.O.S.T.) every three years.

Engelbrecht admits that he hasn't embraced all of the modern technological items at his disposal with equal fervor, but said that change and flexibility have always been important ingredients of a

"Carl has seen everything, knows virtually everyone in his district, and is keenly aware of the unique characteristics of the land and the wildlife it supports."

conservation agent's job. "You have to adjust to the fact that you're going to have to be adjustable," he said.

The art of enforcement

Of course, some skills can't be taught or mechanized through technology. It's some of these inherent talents that have made Engelbrecht an effective enforcer of fish and wildlife regulations for five decades.

"Carl is one of the best agents we have when it comes to interviewing people," said Department of Conservation Protection Division Chief Dennis Steward. "There's just something about Carl that makes you want to tell him what happened. I would say the straight-forward, respectful manner in which he treats people has a lot to do with it."

Watson, who has discussed many conservation-related legal matters with Engelbrecht during his 15 years as Newton County's prosecuting attorney, echoed Steward's sentiments.

"I've had Carl come into my office so many times and say, 'I caught this fellow, we had a long talk, and this is what needs to be done,'" Watson said. "He is wise enough to know that there's no reason to be malicious or hateful to the people he catches because those are the people he also serves."

Engelbrecht says the main component of his interviewing/interrogation technique is courtesy. "I've made a lot of friends through my arrests," he said. "Why? Oh, I don't know—I guess they knew they were in the wrong, they got caught, and they respected the way they were treated."

Resource and role model

Working a half-century in the same area has certainly given Engelbrecht knowledge of the land and the people living on it that has proven to be invaluable in the enforcement of the state's fish and wildlife regulations.

According to Abramovitz, "Carl knows every road and dog trail in the county."

"Carl has seen everything, knows virtually everyone in his district, and is keenly aware of the unique characteristics of the land and the wildlife it supports," Steward said. "He has dealt with several generations of resource users in Newton County. His fair, respectful treatment of people—

including those he caught breaking the rules—no doubt has played a major role in the great support the Missouri Department of Conservation enjoys from the people of Newton County."

Five decades of enforcing wildlife regulations has given Engelbrecht plenty of stories. They range from the comical (catching anglers who had stuffed illegal trout into their overalls), to the perilous (working with Abramovitz to rescue several young adults stranded on an island in a flood-swollen Shoal Creek), to the complex (working with wildlife officials

from the U.S. and other countries in an international enforcement operation to stop illegal trafficking of peregrine falcons in Asia and the United States). Engelbrecht said his duties have been diverse and frequently labor-intensive, but always enjoyable.

"I think the activities are what have kept me at this job," he said. "I never wanted to do anything else. I enjoy what I do, and I enjoy making contacts with people. I don't think I need to retire."

"When Carl does decide to retire, there'll be no replacing him," Watson said. "Someone might come in and take that spot, but you're not going to replace him. The Missouri Department of Conservation, my office and the general public would all be better off if there were a lot more men like Carl Engelbrecht." ▲

"The Missouri Department of Conservation, my office and the general public would all be better off if there were a lot more men like Carl Engelbrecht."



Conservation agents have become more reliant on technology such as global positioning systems and the Internet in recent years.



McPhee

An illustration of a yellow perch fish hanging from a fishing hook. The fish is detailed with orange, yellow, and black stripes. The background is a soft, painterly mix of light green and yellow.

Agents in Action

They teach kids about fishing and hunting and catch *Wildlife Code* violators.

by Brad Hadley and Steve Zap, illustrations by Mark Raithel

“I guess this is your busy time,” or “You guys are sure earning your pay now.”

During deer season, if a conservation agent hears such comments once, they hear them a hundred times. But deer season is just the busiest time in a job full of busy times. So, just what does a conservation agent do the rest of the year?

In addition to law enforcement, which is a year-round job, agents conduct or attend public meetings, put on programs in local schools, teach Hunter Education, appear on radio and television broadcasts, write newspaper articles, arrange and staff exhibits at fishing fairs and other events, visit landowners' property to give resource management recommendations, and answer a variety of conservation-related questions, both face-to-face and over the phone. The box on page 13 gives an idea of the many ways agents fulfill their mission of protecting Missouri's conservation resources.

Some people might wonder why agents are used in so many

ways instead of being allowed to spend all their time patrolling for violators. The fact is that punishing wrongdoers is just a part of the larger goal of every agent, which is to get everyone to comply with our wildlife regulations. Reaching out to teach the public about why such regulations are necessary to protect wildlife is an important step in achieving their primary goal.

Outreach and education efforts fail to persuade a small percentage of people, however. That's why conservation agents continue to work hard at law enforcement, not just during the “busy” times of deer and turkey seasons but year-round. As is the case with their education efforts, the range of their law enforcement duties defies description. However,

the following summaries of cases should convince you that when it comes to law enforcement, conservation agents never have an off-season.

So, just what does a conservation agent do the rest of the year?

Bat Cave

Early one September evening, Wright County Conservation Agent Keith Wollard received a phone call from someone who'd heard several gunshots near Big Smittle Cave and saw a pickup with two people in it leaving the vicinity.

When he went to the area, Agent Wollard found some empty shotgun shells in the road. He also discovered several dead gray bats, a



Hellbenders are long-lived aquatic salamanders that don't reproduce until they are several years old.

state- and federal-endangered species, in the road and in surrounding vegetation.

The next day, Agent Wollard was able to locate one of the responsible parties. The man explained that he and a friend had been dove hunting near the area earlier and hadn't had any luck. On their way home they observed several bats emerging on their evening flight from the cave. The men stopped and started shooting.

Agent Wollard couldn't locate the second person involved that day, but he did run into him later that evening when he arrested him spotlighting and killing deer out of hunting season.

Both men were found guilty of taking endangered species, for which they received stiff fines, a year of probation and 40 hours of community service work. The second man also was found guilty of spotlighting, received additional penalties, and his hunting privileges were revoked for a period of time.

Real Ugly!

A few years ago, while making a routine fishing permit check on a man camped on the Eleven Point River, Oregon County Conservation Agent Paul Veatch discovered a live Ozark hellbender in the fisherman's live basket.

Hellbenders are long-lived aquatic salamanders that don't reproduce until they are several years old. They are found only in high-quality, clear-water streams and have little tolerance for habitat alteration or degradation. At the time, Ozark hellbenders were a protected species of conservation concern, but they are now listed as endangered in the state.

In court, the fisherman plead guilty but told the judge he didn't think he had done anything wrong. He had just wanted to show the hellbender to some friends. The judge in this case was very knowledgeable about hellbenders and gave the entire court a discourse about them. After assessing a small fine, he told all present that the new rule in Oregon County is "... if you catch something that is real ugly and you don't know what it is, you must release it as soon as possible."

Non-moving Violation

Mussels are another aquatic critter of special conservation concern. Because they are essentially unable to move about in nature and are filter feeders, they are good indicator species for overall stream health. Many species are listed on Missouri's Conservation Concern Checklist as critically imperiled, and 11 are listed as endangered.

Pulaski County Conservation Agent Aaron Pondrom was patrolling the Gasconade River one summer day when he noticed two people loading a boat and fishing gear into the back of a pickup. When he contacted them to check their fishing permits, he discovered they were in possession of 72 mussels—62 over the daily limit of 5 per person. Both pleaded guilty.

Also in Pulaski County, conservation agents Casey Simmons and Pondrom were patrolling the Big Piney River when they received a report from a passing canoeist who had moments earlier observed another floater shoot a great blue heron.

Based on the description provided, the agents were able to confront the offender and obtain a confession.

Snakeroot

On a summer day, Texas County Conservation Agent Travis Mills and Howell County Conservation Agent Shawn Pennington were in the same vehicle headed to a problem area for a coordinated patrol when they noticed two men on the shoulder of the roadway and a vehicle parked a couple hundred yards away. Between the men and the vehicle they noticed several uprooted plants and quite a bit of soil disturbance.

They returned a few minutes later only to find the men and the plants already gone. They radioed ahead to the local police, who stopped the vehicle they described.

The men had about 200 pounds of snakeroot they had illegally dug from the public right-of-way. Snakeroot is a plant of commercial value because of its medicinal properties. Both men were cited.

Towering Crimes

The Conservation Department still uses some fire towers to watch for and pinpoint the locations of fires, especially during the spring and fall fire seasons.

So when Conservation Agent Jeff Crites was alerted by a phone call to possible vandalism in progress at a fire tower in Shannon County, his response was immediate.

In this case, the caller reported seeing a vehicle parked in front of a locked gate leading to the tower and two people climbing the tower a few minutes later. Agent Crites met the described vehicle coming out of the restricted area. One of the men inside admitted to using a hammer to break the lock off the gate so he could drive up and "...show my friend the tower."

Agents received a report from a passing canoeist who had moments earlier observed another floater shoot a great blue heron.

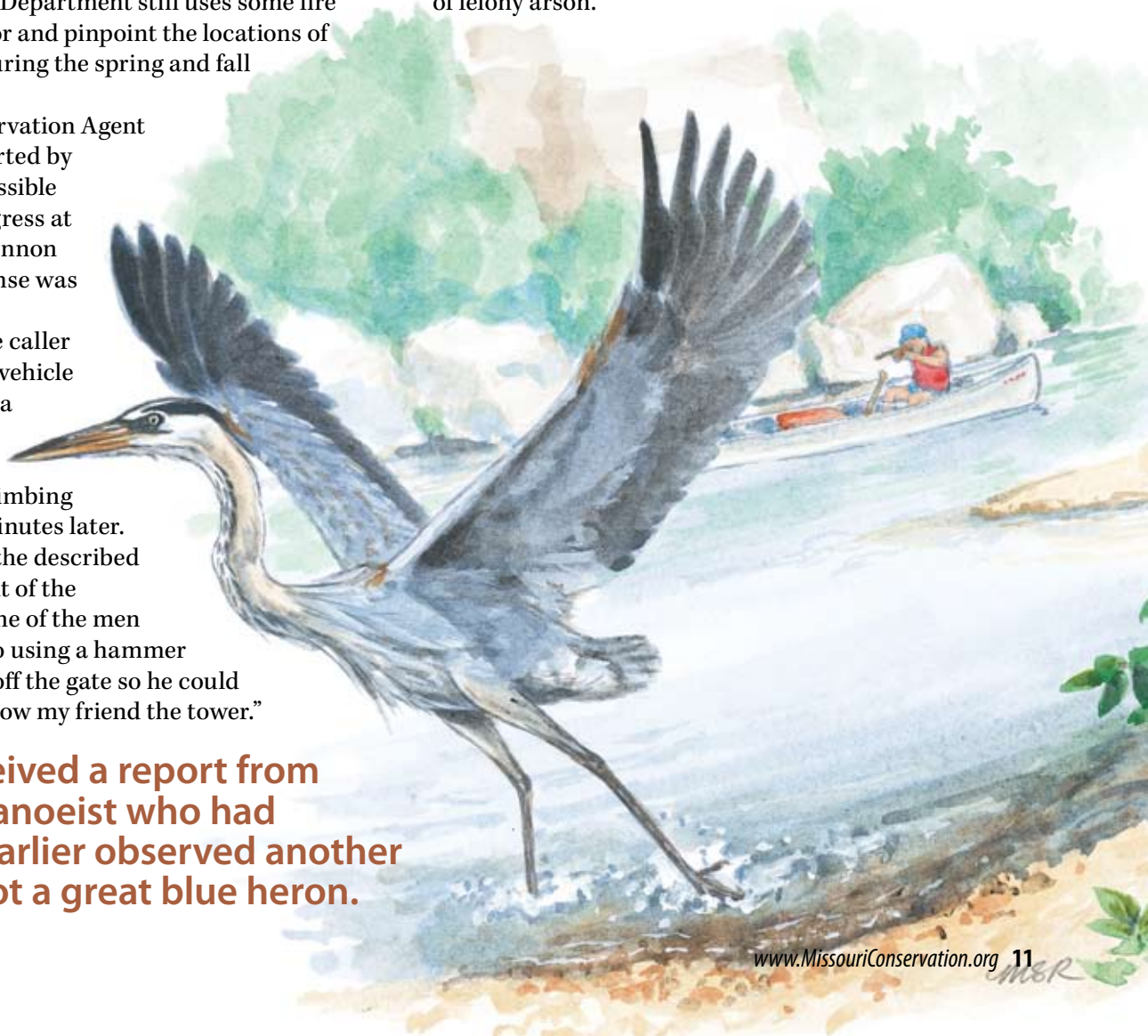
Both men were charged with entering a restricted area and possession of drug paraphernalia. The man who broke the lock was also charged with second-degree property damage. They pleaded guilty to all charges and were assessed fines and court costs.

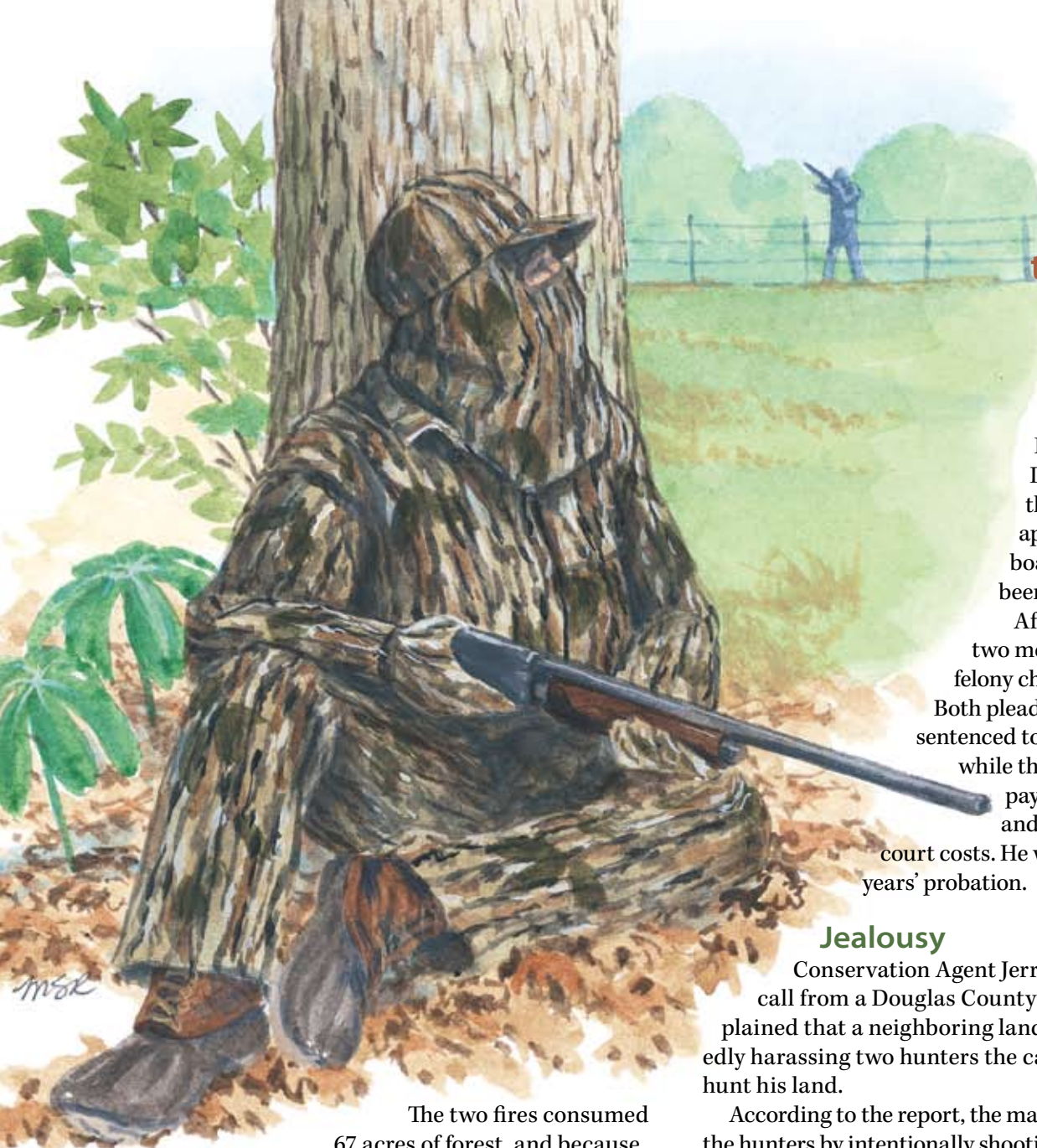
Forest Arson

Wildfire suppression in the Ozark Region is still an activity that requires much time and resources. The job is made harder because of a few people who set fires on purpose.

The first day of April a couple of years ago, a local pilot contracted by the Conservation Department to fly a fire watch reported two fires strung along a county road near the Shannon and Carter county lines. He also spotted a vehicle in the area.

Agents from Shannon and Carter counties, U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement officers, National Park Service rangers and Shannon County Sheriff's Office deputies all responded immediately. The ensuing investigation led to the arrest of a man on two counts of felony arson.





... the man seriously endangered the hunters by intentionally shooting over their heads.

Department's Forestry Division determined that timber yielding approximately 23,000 board feet of lumber had been taken.

After an investigation, two men were arrested on felony charges of stealing. Both pleaded guilty. One was sentenced to three years in prison, while the other was ordered to pay \$1,750 in restitution and \$275.50 in fines and court costs. He was also put on three years' probation.

Jealousy

Conservation Agent Jerry Elliott received a call from a Douglas County landowner who complained that a neighboring landowner was repeatedly harassing two hunters the caller was allowing to hunt his land.

According to the report, the man seriously endangered the hunters by intentionally shooting over their heads.

Agent Elliott enlisted the help of Texas County Conservation Agent Travis Mills and District Supervisor Roy Hoggatt to handle the matter. Mills and Hoggatt were positioned so they could observe the offending landowner's residence while the permitted hunters parked their vehicle and began their hunt.

A couple of hours later, Agent Hoggatt was walking out of the property toward the road when several rifle shots went over his head.

Elliott and Mills immediately went to the offending landowner's property and found him in possession of a rifle. During questioning, he stated that he was trying to "mess up the birds for them." A witness to the events stated that the suspect was upset because he used to hunt the property, but now someone else was.

The suspect was charged with interference with law-

The two fires consumed 67 acres of forest, and because the fires were set on U.S. Forest Service property, the charges went through the federal courts.

The arsonist was ordered to pay \$13,965 in restitution and for the cost of suppressing the fires and to serve nine months in federal prison. After his release from prison, he was put on probation for three years.

Grandmawing

Everyone has a fair chance at the bids for timber sales on Conservation Department lands, but not all people are willing to play fair to obtain the timber.

Through a tip from a concerned citizen, Shannon County Conservation Agent Brad Hadley learned that some people were slipping onto Department land and illegally cutting timber. People in the logging industry sometimes call this type of stealing "grandmawing." The

Conservation Agent Annual Accomplishments

Resource contacts/permit checks	211,347
Meetings/programs	5,695
Radio/TV programs	10,661
News articles	4,730
Exhibits	1,287
Hunter Education students trained	34,491
Resource management contacts	20,320
Other public contacts	302,758
Telephone calls	128,701

ful hunting in the first degree. He pleaded guilty and was fined \$164.50.

Terrorized

A man and wife were camping at the Caney Mountain Conservation Area in Ozark County when, around midnight, 14 men on

alized it was an official vehicle and ran down a hill through some tall weeds and briars.

Lacking protective clothing, the man didn't run very far in the briars before lying down to hide. When apprehended a short time later, the man told Agent Ingram he was "just trying to get a little tan." After more questioning, the man admitted to "flashing" a motorist in the same area a month earlier. He was taken to the Dent County jail and subsequently was found guilty of second-degree sexual misconduct.

You Can Help

You can help conservation agents weed out poachers and others who treat Missouri's wildlife resources unfairly or maliciously by reporting wildlife violations, forest arson or any other type of resource-related crime.

The Operation Game Thief (OGT) toll-free number is 800/392-1111. Post the number near your phone or key it into your cell phone for quick reporting whenever you witness a violation. An operator is standing by 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, to take your call and forward the information to a local conservation agent. Callers may be eligible for a reward and, if they desire, may remain anonymous. Operation Game Thief has been available since 1982 and has resulted in hundreds of arrests since its inception. ▲

ATVs rode into the area. Yelling and cursing, they tore tarps off tents and cut "doughnuts" in the campsites.

When the men finally left, the man and woman, who had feared for their lives and hidden in the woods, quickly got in their vehicle and went to the Ozark County Sheriff's office.

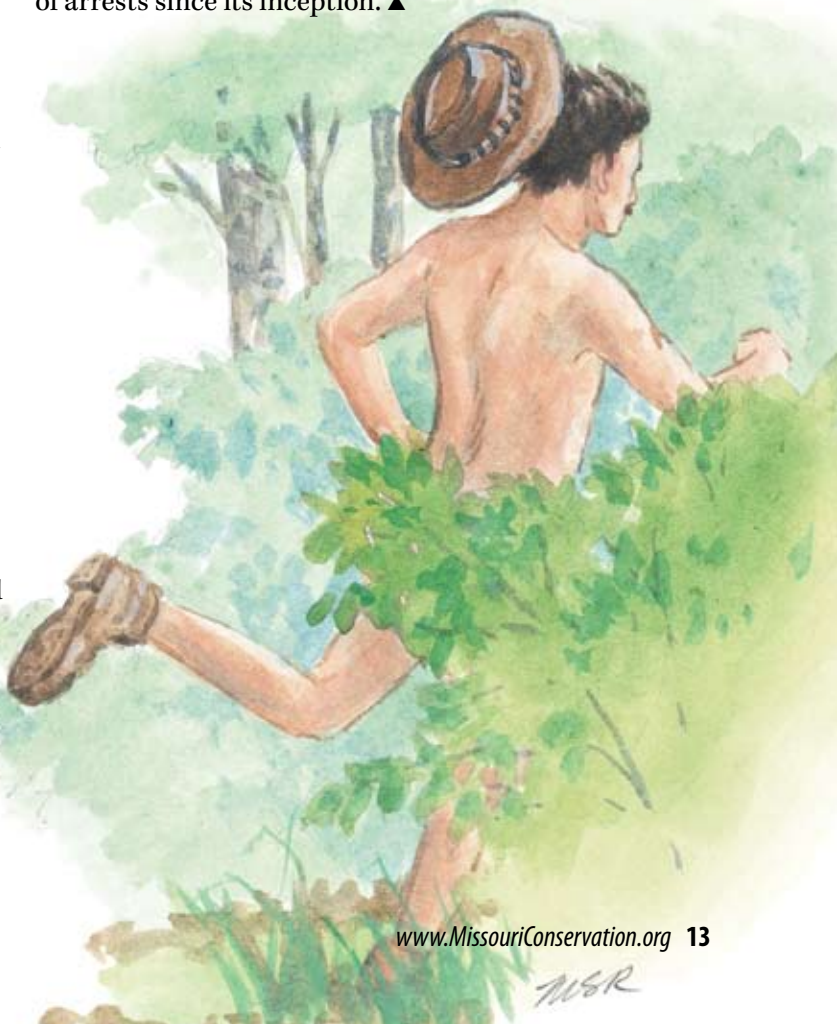
Deputies from the sheriff's office, Gainesville police officers, the Theodosia city marshal, members of the Highway Patrol, and Ozark County conservation agents Quenten Fronterhouse and Tom Leeker all responded immediately. Twelve of the ATV men were promptly rounded up. Each received citations from the agents for unauthorized use of a Department area during closed hours and unauthorized use of motor vehicles on Department areas.

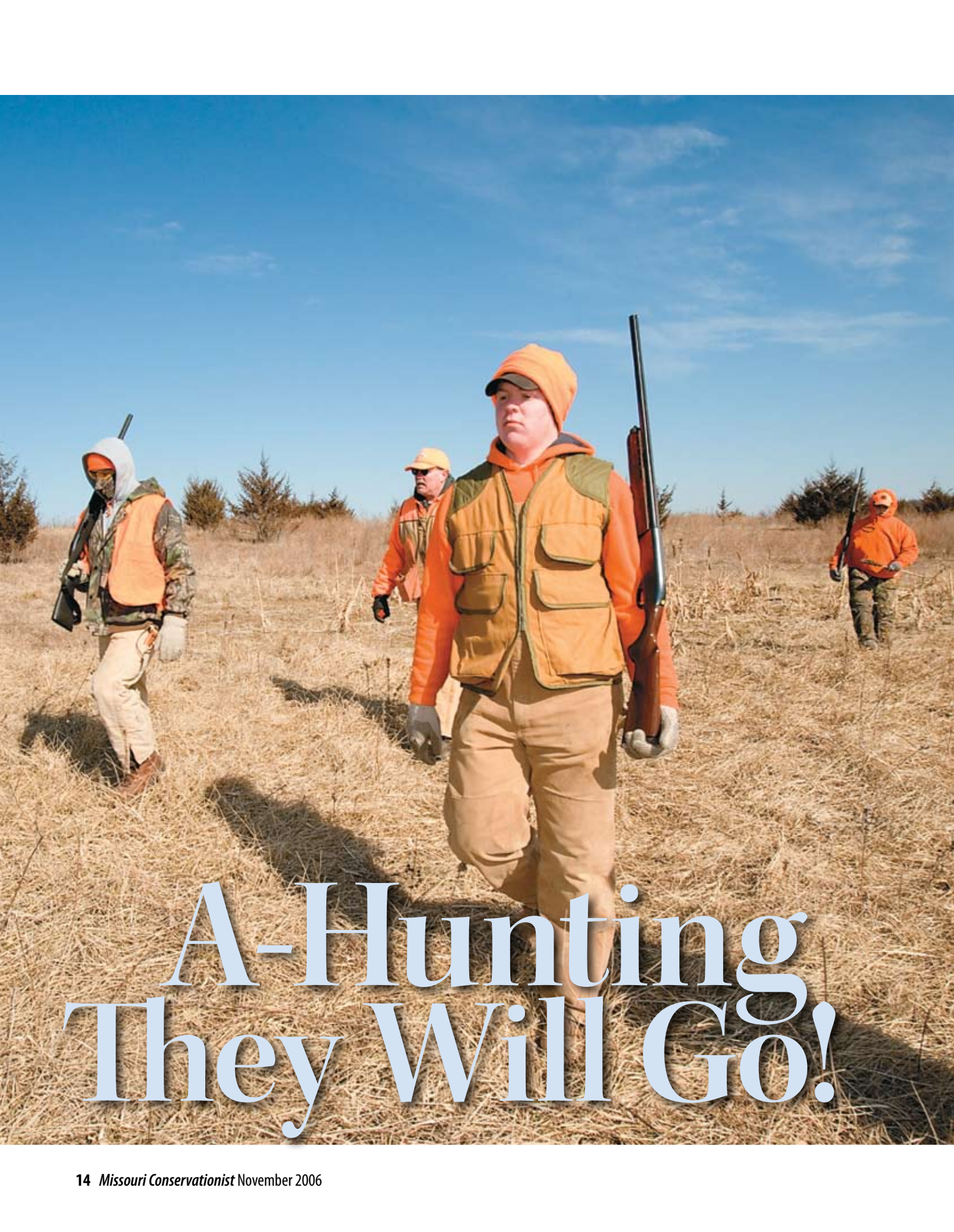
In addition, Highway Patrol officers issued 10 citations for failing to register motor vehicles, and the sheriff's office filed harassment charges against two of the men. The *Ozark County Times* ran a lengthy article about this incident under the headline "Campers 'terrorized' by men on 4-wheelers."

A Flashing Discovery

On an unseasonably warm day in October, Conservation Agent Dave Ingram was patrolling the White River Trace Conservation Area in Dent County. As he drove along, he was surprised to see a man, naked except for hiking boots and a Crocodile Dundee-style hat, in the middle of the service road. The man turned to "flash" whomever was coming, but he quickly re-

Lacking protective clothing, the man didn't run very far in the briars before lying down to hide.





A-Hunting They Will Go!

Youth hunts launch kids into a lifetime of outdoor enjoyment.

by Elsa Gallagher, photos by Noppadol Paothong

The young hunter couldn't contain himself when a pheasant fell to his well-aimed shot. "Dad, did you see?" he shouted. "Did you see me shoot that bird?"

There was plenty of excitement going around at the recent youth upland hunt hosted by The Ozark Plateau Chapter of Quail Forever and the Missouri Department of Conservation's Andy Dalton Shooting Range staff and volunteers.

Twenty-three young hunters enjoyed a morning of instruction and clay-bird shooting at the range while parents looked on and volunteers coached. After a lunch of hotdogs, the youngsters went on a pheasant hunt to put their newly learned skills to use.

As a bird hunter and dog handler, I can't think of a better way to spend a Saturday than helping teenagers develop what may prove to be a lifelong love affair with hunting. The best part of being involved was witnessing the enthusiasm of the kids as they took on the challenge of learning to hunt and seeing family bonds grow stronger as kids enjoyed a wholesome activity with their parents.

As a 13-year-old first-time hunter said to me as we followed the dogs through knee-high grass, "This is the most fun I've had with my mom."

Field Experience

Excitement built as my 5-year-old pointer locked onto a bird about 40 yards out.

"We'd better get over there fast, before that dog jumps in," one youngster exclaimed. I shook my head and told him not to worry. My dog had years of hunting experience and wasn't about to break point.

In a flurry of activity, our brace of first-time hunters rushed to the dog as volunteers helped to position the young hunters for the best possible shots. After a nod to the fellow with the bird-launcher remote, one very large rooster pheasant exploded with a loud cackle from a clump of little bluestem.

The rooster got out quite a ways before our hunters found a clear shot. Still, the bird sailed



More than 40 birds were harvested during the event with the help of staff, volunteers and five canine assistants.

across a fallow field and wobbled to the ground at the edge of a native warm-season grass field over a quarter mile away. We watched him run off into that field like he was trying out for the Olympics. Both our young hunters groaned in dismay. They obviously hadn't hunted with a good bird dog yet.

Rocks (my pointer) had never let me down at one of these youth hunts, and from the speed at which she entered that native-grass field, I didn't think we'd lose that bird. The boys had identical looks of disbelief as she came out of the tall grasses a few minutes later holding a struggling rooster in her mouth.

Another pair of young hunters received praise from instructor Keith DeBow when they correctly identified a hen pheasant and let it fly away without shooting.

Later, a young hunter, Mackenzi, was fretting because she had shot two pheasants in a row, but her friend Mollie hadn't shot any. As luck would have it, Mackenzi

Find a Youth Hunt

To find out about hunts in your area, go to www.missouriconservation.org and click on "What events are going on in my area."

Rules and regulations vary for youth and women's upland hunts. If you have questions, contact the person listed on the announcement.

ended up with her limit of pheasants, and Molly also bagged a rooster, the first pheasant she'd ever shot.

In all, the youngsters, helped by chapter volunteers, Conservation Department staff, one aspiring young bird dog and four seasoned, veteran dogs, harvested more than 40 birds during the hunt.

As the sun was going down, everyone gathered



Pheasant Facts

Pheasants are not native to Missouri. Pheasants first arrived in the U.S. in 1881 when Judge Owen Nickerson Denny (U.S. consul to China) shipped 30 Chinese ringnecks (26 survived the journey) to his home in the Willamette Valley of Oregon.

More than 90 percent of a pheasant chick's diet during the first week of its life consists of insects.

Pheasant hens remain with their broods for eight to 10 weeks, but even under their watchful eyes, about one-half of the chicks will die from natural causes, primarily predation.

Few pheasants die of old age. The average life span of a pheasant is less than one year.

Pheasant Hunting

With favorable winter and spring weather conditions, Missouri hunters should expect to see a 2006 pheasant harvest that is in line with the 30,000-bird average.

Only rooster pheasants are legal to hunt in Missouri during the season, which begins Nov. 1 in the Northern Zone and Dec. 1 in the Southern Zone. The daily limit is two roosters in the Northern Zone, and one rooster in the Southern Zone.

For more information about hunting pheasants in Missouri, see the "2006 Summary of Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations," available at permit sellers statewide, or visit the Conservation Department's Web site at www.missouriconservation.org and search for "pheasant hunting."

around to talk about the thrills of the day. As is usual, most of the talk revolved around the skill of the dogs. Most of the kids either wanted a hunting dog or wanted to train their dog to hunt. I took pleasure in hearing from volunteers and the young hunters that my young dog, Rooster Coggin, had performed admirably. He's developing into a great hunting dog and will be helping on a lot of youth hunts in the future.

Building Traditions

Thanks to conservation partnerships with Quail Forever, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited and Quail Unlimited, among many others, young Missourians have numerous opportunities to participate in a youth hunt.

Chapter members, volunteers and Conservation Department staff believe youth hunts help steer kids toward a lifetime appreciation for hunting and shooting and help strengthen family relationships. Their optimism is partly based on comments from youth hunt participants and their families. Paul Shuler of Springfield, for example, recently wrote to the Conservation Department in appreciation for the extraordinary opportunity to attend a youth hunt with his son, Blake, and to say that his normally "very quiet" son couldn't stop talking about the day on their drive home.

"He's even been asking lots of questions about how to become a conservation agent," Shuler wrote.

Mike Brooks, supervisor at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range, told the youngsters during their training, "You are the future of this sport; you'll build a tradition and share it with your parents."

Thanks to youth hunts, these kids are well-equipped to keep our hunting traditions alive. ▲

Orgs for Kids

"Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever both support the philosophy of educating our youth about the outdoors by letting them experience conservation first-hand," said Cheryl Riley, youth program coordinator for both organizations.

Youths interested in joining Pheasants Forever can sign up for a Ringnecks youth membership. Youths interested in Quail Forever can sign up for a Whistlers youth membership. Both come with a year's subscription to the "Upland Tales" magazine (four issues), a membership card and an invitation to a local PF or QF chapter banquet.

To sign up for PF call toll free at 877/773-2070 or log onto the PF Web site at www.pheasantsforever.org. To sign up for QF call toll free at 877/45-QUAIL or log onto the QF Web site at www.quailforever.org. The annual membership fee for a Ringnecks or Whistlers membership is \$15.



NATURAL GIFTS

The Missouri Conservation Heritage
Foundation helps citizens create
lasting legacies with immediate
benefits for donors.

by Jim Low, photos by Cliff White



NOPPADOL PAOTHONG

Management of the Graham and Gerhild Brown CA is made possible by an endowment and a separate trust fund.

It was the dream of a lifetime for Graham and Gerhild Brown to own a house in the Ozarks. The couple fulfilled that dream when they bought 189 acres in Dent County and built their retirement home there. When Graham became a widower, he found another dream—creating a natural legacy that would proclaim to future generations his and his late wife’s love of the land.

Brown left his Dent County farm to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation (MCHF), which turned the land over to the Conservation Department to create Graham and Gerhild Brown Conservation Area (CA). Graham left instructions to sell his house and the surrounding 10 acres and use the proceeds to set up an endowment. Earnings from that endowment and a separate \$130,000 trust fund he established now pay for managing the area, ensuring the Browns’ legacy.

GIVING AS A COMMUNITY

Sixty miles to the west, Wright County residents had a dream, too. They wanted to ensure that some of Missouri’s most scenic land stayed that way. They envisioned a conservation area that would protect 391 acres—including the headwaters of Bryant Creek and the state’s second-highest point—from development.

The financial challenge was daunting, but the citizens’ group, led by David and Janice Reynolds of Springfield, attacked it with dogged determination. They held bake sales and took on everything else they could think of to raise the \$140,000 needed to buy the land.

They found an unexpected ally in the MCHF. Not only did the Foundation’s nonprofit status provide tax breaks for contributors, but its involvement also demonstrated that the project was rock-solid. Seeing that the project had MCHF backing, the Johnny Morris Foundation

stepped in with a \$100,000 contribution. It was a huge step toward the creation of Cedar Gap CA.

GIVING AS TRADITION

A unique Christmas tradition is the legacy of Dr. Harry and Lina Berrier. Each December for the past 20 years, the couple has made donations out of profits from their successful Show-Me Barbecue Sauce business.

“The Berriers began donating in 1985,” said Grants and Donations Program Coordinator Kit Freudenberg. “They have made donations every year since then, sometimes twice a year, and have let the money accumulate. Their goal was always to build the fund large enough to do something really magnificent. They have reached that goal, and now they are considering a land purchase.”

The Berriers remained anonymous donors until recently, content with knowing their fund was growing through wise investment by MCHF. They finally consented to let their names be released so others could learn from their example.

“Donations don’t have to be enormous to be important,” said Freudenberg. “By putting money into the Foundation each year as the Berriers have done, you can build up quite a sum over time.”

GIVING AS THANKS

Mary Bronstein was a lover of wildflowers and a frequent visitor to Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center. After her death, her husband, Robert, wanted to show his appreciation for all the many happy hours she had spent at the Kirkwood facility. It seemed natural to set up an endowment to care for wildflower plantings around the nature center building. Interest from the trust pays for refurbishing the flower beds each spring and putting them to bed in the fall.

WHAT IS THE MCHF?

Separate from the Conservation Department, but dedicated to the same goals, the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation was formed in 1997. It is governed by a board of directors consisting of business and community leaders who have a history of conservation involvement. The board also includes sev-



Dr. Harry and Lina Berrier have made donations to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation a part of their holiday traditions for the past 20 years.

eral former Conservation Commissioners, officers of the Conservation Federation of Missouri and retired Conservation Department staffers. They are responsible for ensuring that people’s donations are used as they were intended.

Citizens set up the MCHF to do things a government agency cannot. The Foundation can move quickly on real estate purchases. It also can guarantee

MCHF ACHIEVEMENTS

Since its formation nine years ago, the MCHF has accumulated an impressive list of achievements, including:

- Bringing together 13 groups to raise \$256,000 and restore 770 acres of wetland in the upper Truman Lake watershed.
- Funding the creation of more than 200 outdoor classrooms and buying outdoor equipment, such as canoes and fishing gear.
- Funding disabled-accessible hunting and wildlife viewing blinds and fishing piers.
- Organizing outdoor skills camps for urban youths.
- Raising \$4.3 million for the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center in Kansas City.
- Purchasing electronic surveillance equipment to deter vandalism at conservation areas.
- Funding habitat work for grassland birds, such as prairie chickens and bobwhite quail, as well as other wildlife.



Interest from Mary Bronstein's trust helps care for wildflower plantings at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center.

that contributions will be used for specific projects. Furthermore, accepting donations of land and other real estate is much simpler for the Foundation than for the Conservation Department, as the Browns' example demonstrates.

As a nonprofit group organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code, the MCHF offers tax advantages otherwise not available to donors. Gifts to the Foundation can be particularly advantageous under certain circumstances.

For example, when someone donates stocks or bonds, as former Conservation Commissioner and Foundation President Howard Wood did, the Foundation can sell the securities and put all the proceeds to work for conservation. If Wood had sold the stock, worth \$500,000, and donated the money, he would have had to pay capital gains taxes on any increase in

value the stocks showed since purchase, decreasing the value of his gift.

Finally, the MCHF can do things that are beyond government's financial means.

"Missourians are extremely supportive of conservation," said Freudenberg, "but they also have very high expectations of conservation. People are asking more than the conservation sales tax can deliver. The Foundation supports conservation programs by obtaining funds from other sources. In recent years, this

added money has helped the Conservation Department stretch available funds for projects such as the Cape Girardeau Conservation Campus and land restoration. Planned giving through the Conservation Heritage Foundation is one way Missourians can be partners in projects they especially want to see accomplished."

GETTING INVOLVED

You can make contributions or receive more information by contacting the Foundation at MCHF, P.O. Box 366, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0366, call 573/634-2080 or 800/227-1488, fax 573/751-4467, or e-mail mchf@MoCHF.org.

PRIORITIES AND PLANNED GIVING

Freudenberg said the reasons for planned giving are highly personal. For some, the love of a place or activity provides the motivation. For others, it may be a desire to give back to an activity, such as hunting, that has provided a lifetime of fulfillment.

Whatever the reason, said Freudenberg, every gift should be based on careful forethought. People who rush into decisions about donations, bequests and other gifts risk losing potential benefits to both themselves and their favorite project.

“Planned giving means carefully assessing your assets and looking for the best way to structure a donation,” said Freudenberg. “Assets can be tangible things, such as cash, land, buildings, stocks or bonds, or something that is intangible, such as a conservation easement. Each one has a different set of considerations that



From left: Randy Herzog, Anita Gorman and Howard Wood, all former conservation commissioners, are on the board of directors for the Foundation.

should be discussed with a legal or financial advisor.”

The MCHF has a variety of ways for donors to contribute to conservation, each with unique benefits. One arrangement is a life estate, where a landowner can reap the benefits of donating property for conservation while continuing to live on and retain control of the land as long as he or she lives. The Foundation receives the property upon the donor’s death.

Another strategy is to donate funds for a charitable remainder trust. Under this arrangement, donors receive payments from the trust as long as they live. The money in the trust passes to the Foundation for conservation upon the donor’s death. MCHF has invested funds with the Community Foundation of the Ozarks for assistance with deferred giving plans.

“If you watch the Foundation’s work, you can’t help but be impressed by two things,” said Wood. “First of all, many of the projects provide seed money—initial funding to get something started. An example is the new [anti] vandalism reward program, similar to Operation Game Thief and Operation Forest Arson. The other thing that is notable is that a large number of the projects involve partnerships with every kind of conservation entity you can imagine. That multiplies the benefits to conservation.”

“The Conservation Heritage Foundation provides a way for the little guy to play a part in big things,” said former Conservation Commissioner Randy Herzog.

Former Commissioner Anita B. Gorman agreed. “By donating what they can for things that are important to them, anyone can make a real difference. Far from getting lost in a sea of donations, these are the sea.” ▲

EARMARK PROJECTS

Missourians who want to support conservation but don’t know where to start can choose from a number of categories set up by the MCHF. Contributing to one of these allows donors to focus their contribution in one area.

One of these exciting “earmark” programs is the Stream Stewardship Trust Fund. This money is available to help landowners with stream conservation.

An example of the program at work took place in Miller County. The county commission’s efforts to stabilize a road crossing on Little Tavern Creek unintentionally destroyed fish habitat and a traditional swimming hole. It also caused the bridge approach to flood during heavy rains, making road problems worse. Money from the Stream Stewardship Program helped fix the problem, while at the same time restoring habitat for the endangered Niangua darter.

Other earmarked-gift categories include:

- Land and Coldwater Stream Acquisition
- Nature Centers
- Habitat Restoration and Conservation Area Improvements
- Kids Fishing and Youth Hunting Events
- Missouri Stream Teams
- Natural Resource Research Projects
- Wildlife Enforcement and Hunter Education Programs
- Anti-Vandalism Reward Fund





Stand or Sneak?

No matter which deer-hunting method you choose, you'll still second-guess yourself. by Tom Cwynar

Missouri deer hunters take one of two general approaches to harvesting their game. They either wait in one spot for deer to come to them, or they move around, hoping to scare up deer, sneak up on deer or intercept deer that are themselves moving.

The first is called stand-hunting; the second, still-hunting. Which is better? Well, as any grizzled, deer-hunting philosopher would tell you, "It depends."

Both methods are pretty simple. Stand-hunters wait in a ground blind, in a tree stand or behind natural cover, or they just remain out in the open, trusting that a lack of movement and noise on their part will allow them to escape the notice of moving deer. Very few hunters actually stand in stands; most sit and a few recline, sometimes luxuriantly.

Still-hunters try to walk into the vicinity of deer. Because deer are reluctant to share their personal space with humans, these hunters either have to be lucky and catch a deer that's not paying attention, or



they have to walk quietly and slowly enough that a deer doesn't see or hear them.

I like to call still-hunting sneaking. It differs from stalking in the sense that you usually don't have a specific target in mind. You're just moving around quietly hoping to cross paths with a deer.

Both standing and sneaking work well some of the time, but neither works all of the time. In fact, the most frustrating thing about both methods is that they usually give you enough time between deer sightings to think that it might have been better to hunt the other way. When you're not seeing deer in the woods, it's very easy to imagine deer where you are not.

Oddsmaking

During one of those long mornings when I'd sat in a stand with nothing to look at but trees, rocks and shrubs and only my gurgling stomach breaking the silence, I tried to calculate whether sneaking or stand-hunting is better. I happened to think about those cowpie raffles, in which a field is marked off into sections and the location of the cow's first deposit determines the winner.

I imagined the woods divided into 100 equal sections and containing only me and one deer. The winning combination would be when the deer and I occupied the same section. Given those conditions, at any given moment I have a 1-percent chance of that deer being in the section I'm guarding.

If the deer moves through five different sections during the time I remain on stand, I have a 5-percent chance of encountering it, assuming that being in the same section as the deer means that I would see it. If I move through five sections and the deer remains still, the odds of having all six legs of the two animals involved occupying the same section at some time during the hunt are also 5 percent.

Because I used only my fingers and my cold toes in the calculations, my math became a little clumsy when I tried to figure the odds should the deer and I both move through five sections during the time I was hunting.

You might think the dual movement improves the chances but, instead, it allows the possibility of me moving into an area that the deer had already occupied, or vice versa. Essentially, I was back to the same 1-percent chance that both of us would occupy the same section at the same time.

In addition to being wonderfully time-consuming,

the exercise was constructive. It suggested that if the deer were moving, I would be better off in a stand, but if the deer were laying up somewhere, I'd be better off sneaking.

Of course, I didn't bother with speed of movement, duration of stay in a section, unhuntability or uninhabitability sections or other complications. The odds only hold for purely random movement throughout the entire woods by either deer or hunter. Fortunately, we can improve those odds by eliminating some of the randomness.

For one thing, we can take advantage of patterns of deer movement. Deer are crepuscular animals, which means they are usually most active near sunrise and sunset. This suggests that your most fruitful approach to hunting early in the morning and late in the day is to sit and wait. If you want to sneak, take advantage of the times when the deer aren't likely to be moving.

Because deer movement often involves traveling between bedding and feeding areas, we have a better chance of intercepting deer if we sit and wait somewhere between those destinations.

Stand-Hunting Lessons

I used to bowhunt not far from a big field. I was able to hunt a lot of mornings and evenings and got to the point where I could guess pretty well when the deer would be moving and in what direction they would be heading. During the day, they bedded anywhere from a quarter-mile to a mile in the woods, usually in the thick stuff. Most evenings they commuted to the field. I suspect they stayed in or near the field through the night, because the deer I'd see in the mornings were usually headed back into the woods.

Once I'd learned the general pattern, I kind of played with it, setting my stand in different places and hunting at various times.

I saw plenty of deer, and what impressed me most was that they were less creatures of habit than creatures of tendency. They tended to and from the field, but that's about all I could predict about them. The deer didn't always use the same trails, for example, and they traveled at different times. Sometimes they were in groups, and sometimes they'd be solo. They also moved at different speeds, poking along one day and rushing as if late for a meeting another day.

Both standing and sneaking work well some of the time, but neither works all of the time.

Your best chance of seeing deer that are moving is when you are sitting still, whether in a blind, a stand, or in the open.



CLIFF WHITE

Improve your odds by placing stands between bedding and feeding areas. Keep your head and hands as still as possible.

I saw the most deer from stands anywhere from 100 yards to a quarter-mile from the field. When I set up right at the field edge, the deer seemed to arrive too late or too early, and they seemed really “edgy.”

Another drawback to field-edge stands is that I was too close to where they were when I was leaving or arriving. Deer aren’t dopes. From the field, they can hear a hunter climbing into a nearby stand or climbing down from it. They might not know it’s a hunter they’re hearing, but being naturally cautious, they might avoid areas that generate unusual noises.

Even when I set up away from the field, I made a point of approaching my stand from the field side in the late afternoon for an evening hunt and from the woods side for a morning hunt; I left the stand heading the opposite directions. That way I was always approaching or leaving from where I figured the deer weren’t.

They often “made” me anyway. That’s the only way to explain why I generally saw more whitetails when I put the stand in a new place but fewer the more days I hunted from it. The deer either whiffed my “perfume,” or spotted me moving my head or hands.

Something About Sneaking

It’s hard to spend long hours in even the most comfortable stand. When I’ve got a whole day to hunt, I usually plan to sit early and late and sneak in between. In fact, it’s while sneaking that I usually find new places—trails or scrapes, for example—to place my stand.

When I’m sneaking, I feel more like a hunter. Maybe it’s because I can’t multi-task. I’ve hoisted books, MP3 players, video games and notepads into my treestands and still saw deer, but sneaking forces me to be focused and deliberate.

Everyone knows how to sneak. We’re always surprising brothers, sisters, cats and dogs by sneaking up on them—great fun! Sneaking through the woods isn’t much different. We have to travel quietly and slowly, hiding behind trees or brush whenever we can.

Because we don’t know what we’re looking for or where it is, we have to remain extremely alert. Experts tell us that we shouldn’t look for a whole deer, but for parts of a deer, especially the horizontal line marking the bottom or top of the deer’s body. One of my favorite sneaks involves creeping like a box turtle through

cedars, looking beneath the limbs for deer legs.

Travel slowly enough that you can spot almost any movement, even the flick of a deer's ear. Remember, they are as likely to be lying down as standing. Your goal is to see a deer before it senses you. If you're startled by sudden noise and see a white rump bouncing away through the woods, you've lost the sneak game.

I can be quietest when the woods are soggy, but I also like to sneak around in dry, windy conditions. I think strong breezes whisk my scent away quickly, giving only those deer directly downwind a chance to sniff me. Also, the wind rustling through the dry woods provides a kind of "white noise" that masks any ruckus I might make. The same wind shakes branches and leaves, which probably makes it more difficult for the deer to pick up my slow movements.

My most memorable sneak actually was a stalk. I disturbed a couple of deer when I approached my tree-stand early one morning. They clumped off noisily in the dark, but they didn't go far. Not long after full light, I could see two deer milling around in a patch of tall grass about 300 yards away. As I watched them through binoculars from my perch, they suddenly vanished.

The deer had bedded down.

They weren't coming to me, so I decided to go to them. Before lowering my bow and easing myself out of the tree, I noted landmarks and planned a stalk toward where I'd last seen the deer. I had all morning to hunt and told myself to use it all if necessary to get close enough for a shot—about 15 yards. From the time my foot first hit the ground, I took every step slowly, deliberately and quietly.

The wind that came up gave me a lot of confidence. I was mostly moving into it, so the deer couldn't smell me, and if I was stealthy they probably wouldn't hear me. The wind also whipped the grass where they were bedded, so they would have trouble seeing me. Confidence breeds competence: I have never been sneakier.

I plotted each footfall, kept trees between me and my destination and moved only when the wind gusted. If I did happen to snap a twig, I froze for at least a minute before even thinking about shifting my weight further.

A couple of very enjoyable hours passed before I found myself on the edge of the grassy plot without a clue of what to do next. I had an arrow nocked and was ready to draw, but I had no target. The deer were still hidden in the grass. I kept moving forward, extra

**Which is better?
Well, as any grizzled,
deer-hunting
philosopher would tell
you, "It depends."**



NOPPADOL PAOTHONG

Find new hunting spots as you move through the woods. Portable blinds let you switch from sneaking to standing.

alert, hoping that I could startle them into standing up without spooking them out of range.

It happened just that way. The deer popcorned up, one right after another, both within easy shooting range and both staring at me to the point of rudeness. I didn't dare pull the bow, but the deer to my left forced my hand when she began to circle matter-of-factly to a point downwind of me. She apparently wanted to get to the bottom of my sudden apparition. If she whiffed me, I knew they would both be gone.

I slowly drew on the standing deer, even though it was looking at me. I could see its muscles tense, and we both seemed to release at exactly the same moment. It ran off, as did the sniffing deer, and I spent the next 15 minutes locating my arrow in the grass. What a great hunt!

Actually, they all are. It's not really so important that I see a deer or shoot one when I'm hunting. It's enough to know that I have a chance to do either, and that I can improve my chances by applying the hunting skills of stealth, patience, woodsmanship and awareness.

As a bonus, I don't think I've ever been on a hunt when I didn't marvel at or appreciate something wild and natural and worth telling others about. When you take such benefits into account, the odds in deer hunting, whether you're standing or sneaking, are always in your favor. ▲



A WALK IN THE SNOW REVEALS QUALITY QUAIL HABITAT

Quail, rabbits and other ground-nesting wildlife need several things to thrive. High on the list of needs is “escape cover”—places where they can hide from predators. Shrubby thickets are among the best escape cover. Wild plum, blackberry, aromatic sumac, hazelnut and elderberry all can provide excellent escape cover, but not just any thicket will do. If the growth is too thin on top, hawks and other airborne predators can get at their prey. Also, an open top

allows sunlight to reach the ground, producing thick undergrowth that makes it hard for prey animals to get inside and move around. The best time to see how a thicket stacks up is when there is snow on the ground. You should be able to see open ground at quail- or rabbit-eye level. For information about how to “build” a quail and rabbit thicket, visit www.coveyheadquarters.com or www.muextension.missouri.edu/explore/miscpubs/mp0902.htm.

Conservation partners work to make Missouri Firewise

State and federal agencies are working together to protect Missourians’ lives and property from wildfire. A grant from the USDA Forest Service, in conjunction with the Conservation Department and the Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Councils, will enable the state to implement Firewise. This program focuses on teaching

people how to live more safely with the threat of wildfire.

Program participants learn that the “fire environment” consists of three factors that influence how a fire burns. These are weather, topography and fuels. Of these factors, only one—fuels—can be modified. Fuels can be treated, cleared or removed to slow wildfires. An area that has been modified to reduce fire is called a defensible space.

Firewise teaches homeowners how to create defensible spaces around homes. Homes with defensible spaces have a greater chance of surviving wildfires. Such spaces also reduce the chances of structure fires moving from buildings to surrounding forest.

The Forest Service grant permits the hiring of a fire protection specialist for two years to help communities implement Firewise. For more information, contact Todd Chlanda, 417/439-0218, or the nearest Conservation Department office (see page 1 for a list of regional office phone numbers).



Missouri cleans up in State Fish Art Contest

Missouri's state fish, the channel catfish, is enjoying some extra fame these days, courtesy of three budding artists. The trio of Missouri youths brought their state's finny icon to new prominence with winning entries in Wildlife Forever's State Fish Art Contest. Sisters Brie and Tiara Jenkins of Pittsburg won Best of Show in their grade levels for paintings of channel catfish pursuing a frog and a crayfish. Brie won first place nationally in 7th through 9th grades, while Tiara won second in 10th through 12th grades. Meanwhile, Brenden McKeon of Desoto, Mo., won first place in the state competition in 4th through 6th grades with a pencil drawing of a channel catfish. Tiara's winning artwork appears on the Art of Conservation commemorative stamp sheet. The winners received prizes, including rods and reels and art supplies. The entry deadline for the 2007 contest is March 31. For more information about the contest, visit www.statefishart.com or contact Brett Richardson, brichardson@wildlifeever.org, 763/253-0222.

Poachers soon to have nowhere to hide

There was a time when poachers could escape the consequences of their illegal activities just by crossing a state line. Those days are gone, thanks to the Interstate Wildlife Violator's Compact. The compact is an agreement between 22 states to honor one another's hunting and fishing privilege suspensions. Wildlife offenders whose crimes get them suspended in one state lose the same privileges in all 22.

Nearly 4,000 hunters and anglers nationwide have received suspensions by compact member states. Missouri ranked seventh in the number of suspensions with 89. Top states were Idaho (294), Iowa (251) and Minnesota (240). In 2005 alone, member states suspended 1,650 hunters and anglers. In Missouri, suspension durations depend on the number and severity of violations. One year is the most common period, but a life suspension is possible.

The only people affected are repeat offenders or those who commit very serious violations. The average outdoors person who gets a ticket for a wildlife

violation actually benefits from the compact. Before the agreement was in place, member states had trouble collecting fines from nonresidents. To ensure compliance, states often required offenders to post bonds or appear in court before leaving the state where the violation occurred. Now officers issue citations knowing that if violators try to evade penalties, they will lose hunting and fishing privileges in their home states.

Compact states have ultimate discretion in observing other states' suspensions. Although it is in each state's interest to honor most suspensions, they can evaluate the merit of every suspension and choose which to honor.

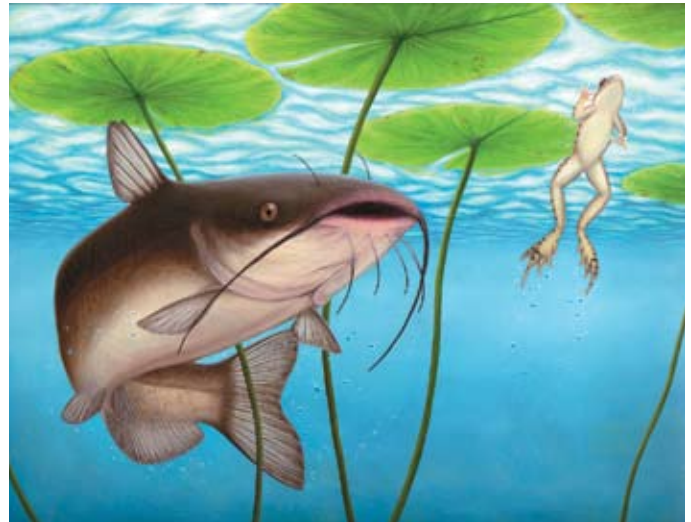
22 Member States

Arizona	Missouri
California	Montana
Colorado	Nevada
Georgia	New Mexico
Idaho	New York
Indiana	North Dakota
Iowa	Oregon
Kansas	South Dakota
Maryland	Utah
Michigan	Washington
Minnesota	Wyoming

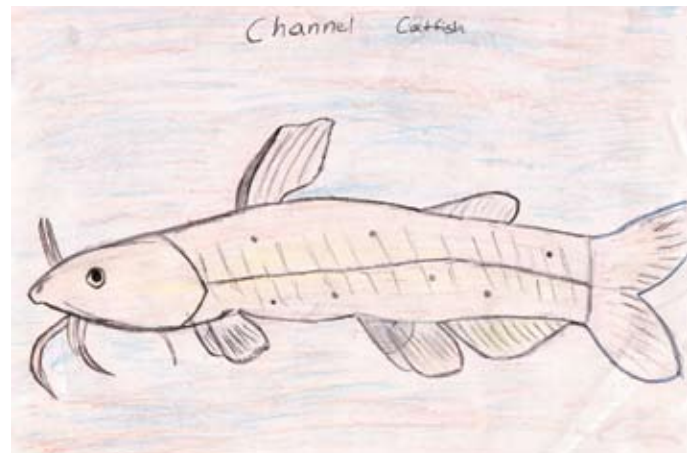
States with enabling legislation in progress

Alaska	Tennessee
Florida	West Virginia
Ohio	Wisconsin

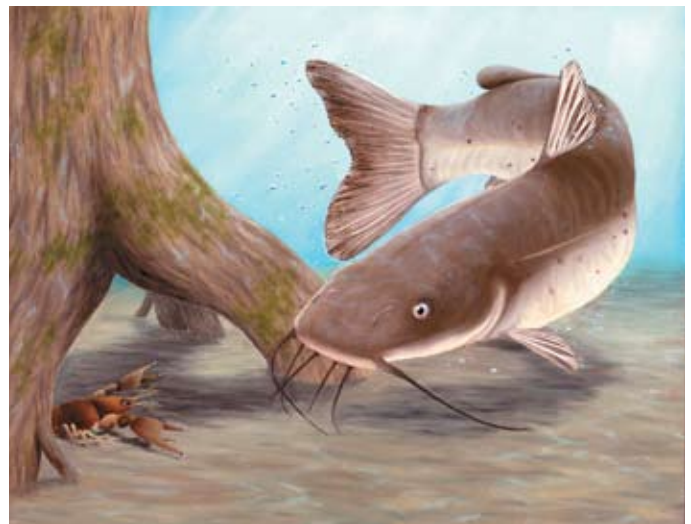
Missourians can turn in poachers by calling the toll-free Operation Game Thief Hot Line 800/392-1111.



Tiara Jenkins won second place nationally in 10th through 12th grades.



Brenden McKeon of Desoto won first place in the state competition in 4th through 6th grades.



Brie Jenkins won first place nationally in 7th through 9th grades.



Duck bands are more than just cool souvenirs

Waterfowl hunters who are lucky enough to shoot ducks or geese wearing leg bands proudly display the trophies on duck call lanyards. But these bands are much more than fashion accessories. Hunters who report retrieving bands can learn the life stories of the birds that carried them.

Bird bands are important tools for biologists in making management decisions about waterfowl. State and federal officials band thousands of ducks and geese each year. Most are never seen again. But hunters take some of the birds, enabling scientists to retrieve valuable information about birds' lifespan and travels.

For this to happen, the hunter has to read the inscription etched on the band and report it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). In return, the FWS sends back information about where and when the bird was banded.

Each band bears a serial number and information about how to report its recovery. For information about the history of bird banding and the use of bird-band data, visit www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/default.htm.

Missourians dominate Youth Hunter Education Challenge

Missouri youths brought home dozens of awards from the International Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) in Mansfield, Pa., in July. The Show-Me State's Junior Sharpshooters—consisting of Matthew Brooks, Kyle Dunda, Logan Gerloff, Mason Horstman and Derek Wilson—won the archery, rifle, hunter-safety and responsibility exam competitions. They placed second in the wildlife identification exam and third in shotgun shooting and placed second overall in the team competition.

Brooks, from Fair Grove, won the Junior Championship, and Wilson, of Jefferson City, came in second. Brooks won the hunter-safety trail competition and placed second in archery. Wilson won the archery competition and placed second in the rifle and hunter-safety trail competition.

More than 50,000 youths ages 11 to 18 take part in state and provincial YHEC programs each year. The best of those qualify for the international competition. They compete in marksmanship contests with rifles, shotguns, bows and arrows and muzzle-loading rifles, in addition to events that test their grasp of hunting safety and responsibility and their ability to identify wildlife by tracks and other signs.

To learn more about the program, contact Missouri YHEC Coordinator Jan Morris, JGMorris@aol.com, 636/464-6214 or visit www.moyhec.com.

Nature lover Gail Oehrke leaves legacy

For some, a lifetime love affair with nature ends with their deaths. That is not the case with the late Gail Oehrke, who created a living legacy through volunteer service at Runge Conservation Nature Center in Jefferson City. Oehrke, a retired educator from Owensville, joined the nature center's cadre of dedicated volunteer naturalists in 1993, the same year the facility opened. In the ensuing 13 years, he invested more than 5,000 hours sharing his passion for the natural world with thousands of children at special events and off-site exhibits and through the Conservation Kids Club. Oehrke died July 10. He will be missed, but the influence he exerted on young hearts and minds is a legacy that no amount of money could ever buy.

MIDWAY KIDS LAUNCH HOUSING PROJECT FOR BIRDS

Cass Midway Elementary students were busy pounding nails and building houses last April 28, and it was all for the birds. Students in grades K through 6 built more than 50 birdhouses. School Resource Officer Cpl. Kevin Tieman of the Cass County Sheriff's Office organized the event, and the Harrisonville Family Center donated hammers and hardware for the project. Home Depot of Belton donated the lumber. The Conservation Department, which supplied house plans, will put up the houses at conservation areas around Cass County. Cass Midway High School students cut the lumber and organized materials before the event and helped supervise the younger students' work. A naturalist from the Lakeside Nature Center presented a program about birds of prey. The project was part of Cass Midway's Characterplus program that brings together schools, parents and businesses to develop the character of young people.





Grant program targets urban open space

With the supply of open space dwindling in urban areas, the Conservation Department wants to encourage the stewardship of what remains. That is the goal of the Community Stewardship Grant Program in the St. Louis area. The existence of several groups dedicated to preserving and enhancing the value of urban open space in the metropolitan area is a tremendous asset to the effort.

The program seeks to support volunteer efforts to manage open space to encourage wildlife in St. Louis City, St. Louis and St. Charles counties and northern Jefferson County. Funding is available to nonprofit groups, parks departments and other land-management entities and volunteer groups in the metro area.

Projects that could qualify for grants include restoring native plants to areas that previously were mowed or unmaintained, planting trees, controlling exotic plants and building trails. Grants of up to \$10,000 will be available, with preference given to projects with local cost-sharing or in-kind contributions. The application deadline is Dec. 22. For more information, call Erin Shank, 314/301-1500.

Help Monitor the Deer Herd

Missourians, and especially deer hunters, are asked to report sick deer as part of an ongoing statewide Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) monitoring program.

Between 2002 and 2004, the Department, with the help of deer hunters, tested 22,000 deer from across the state for CWD. All tests were negative. With the conclusion of the sampling program in 2004, our surveillance efforts shifted to sampling sick deer reported by the public. This strategy has been successful in other states.

Hunters who harvest a deer that appears sick should contact a Department regional office. In some cases, the hunter may receive a replacement permit.

If you see a sick deer, make detailed notes about where and when the animal was observed and pass these along to Department staff (see page 1 for a list of our regional office phone numbers).

While CWD has not been found in Missouri, it is a concern in the management of white-tailed deer at the national level. Research continues to show no links to human or livestock diseases. The Missouri State CWD Task Force, a coordinated effort between the Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Agriculture and a variety of other governmental and conservation organizations, continues to monitor CWD issues and develop recommended actions as needed.

Long-time agent goes out with a wail

Laclede County Conservation Agent Betty Stricklen didn't want her 26-year career to end in a whimper, so she went out with a wail. The agent, much of whose career was spent in and around Bennett Spring State Park, ended her tour of duty there by sounding the siren to mark the end of fishing hours on July 31.

When Stricklen began her agent training in 1980, Missouri had only one woman working as a conservation agent. She is the first woman to retire from the job. She came to Laclede County during deer season in 1981 and has worked there ever since. Although she hardly knew where Lebanon, Mo., was back then, she and her husband, Herman, have sunk roots in the community and plan to stay there in retirement.

Stricklen overcame gender stereotypes, paving the way for women who would follow her. She was known for her businesslike approach when making contacts in the field, her methodical record-keeping and her dogged determination in pursuing cases.

More than 100 people attended Stricklen's retirement dinner Aug. 27. Protection Regional Supervisor Kurt Kysar said the crowd was a direct reflection on Stricklen's career.

"Normally about 99 percent of the people at these retirement parties are from the Conservation Department," said Kysar. "At this one, it was just about the opposite. Betty won a lot of support for conservation during her career. She was a fantastic agent with excellent community support."



Outdoor Calendar

Hunting	open	close
Common Snipe	9/1/06	12/16/06
Coyotes	5/15/06	3/31/07
Crow	11/1/06	3/3/07
Deer		
Archery	9/15/06	11/10/06
	11/22/06	1/15/07
November	11/11/06	11/21/06
Muzzleloader	11/24/06	12/3/06
Antlerless	12/9/06	12/17/06
Dove	9/1/06	11/9/06
Furbearers	11/15/06	2/15/07
Groundhog	5/15/06	12/15/06
Pheasant		
North Zone	11/1/06	1/15/07
South Zone	12/1/06	12/12/06
Quail	11/1/06	1/15/07
Rabbits	10/1/06	2/15/07
Ruffed Grouse	10/15/06	1/15/07
Sora and Virginia Rails	9/1/06	11/9/06
Squirrels	5/27/06	2/15/07
Turkey, Archery	9/15/06	11/10/06
	11/22/06	1/15/07
Waterfowl	please see the <i>Waterfowl Hunting Digest</i> or see www.missouriconservation.org/hunt/wtrfowl/info/seasons	
Woodcock	10/15/06	11/28/06

Fishing	
Black Bass (certain Ozark streams, see the <i>Wildlife Code</i>)	
	5/27/06 2/28/07
impoundments and other streams year round	
Gigging nongame fish	9/15/06 1/31/07

Trapping	
Beaver	11/15/06 3/31/07
Furbearers	11/15/06 2/15/07
Otters & Muskrats	11/15/06 see <i>Wildlife Code</i>

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code* and the current summaries of *Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations* and *Missouri Fishing Regulations*, the *Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information*, the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* and the *Migratory Bird Hunting Digest*. This information is on our Web site at www.MissouriConservation.org/regs/ and at permit vendors.

The Conservation Department's computerized point-of-sale system allows you to purchase or replace your permits through local vendors or by phone. The toll-free number is 800/392-4115. Allow 10 days for delivery of telephone purchases. To purchase permits online go to www.wildlifelicence.com/mo/.



OPERATION GAME THIEF
1-800-392-1111

AGENT NOTEBOOK

Conservation agents

sometimes come across situations that leave an impression on us. This happened to me on opening morning of the youth deer season.

While on patrol, a fellow agent and I came upon an 11-year-old boy and his father. The youngster was very excited and said he had just shot at a big buck, but the buck had run into a field of standing corn.

Having on many occasions experienced cases in which a young hunter had fired a shot at a big buck and missed, I quietly asked the father if he thought his son had hit the deer. He said he thought it looked like a good shot. We searched and, sure enough, found a spot of blood on the ground. We followed the blood trail into the field of standing corn and, about 50 yards in, we came upon the dead buck. The young hunter had made a perfect shot.

I know this sounds like any other youth hunt, but this one was special because both the boy and his father were handicapped. Yet, here they were on opening morning of youth deer season having a great time.

I was exceptionally proud of the Conservation Department for making it possible for this young man to hunt with his father.

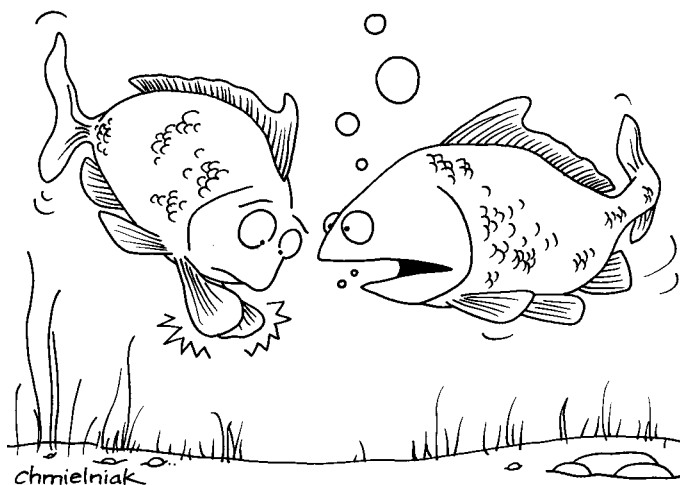
—Conservation Agent Russ Shifflett, Holt County



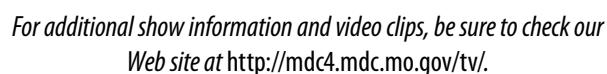
To learn about Missouri's quail recovery efforts, check out

www.missouriconservation.org

Keyword: quail



"Swimming day and night...the repetitive strokes...you've got a classic case of carp-and-tuna syndrome."



Perryville PVTV
Platte City Unite Cable
Poplar Bluff Poplar Bluff City Cable
Ste. Genevieve Ste. Genevieve Cable
St. Charles SC20 City Cable
St. Louis Charter Cable
St. Louis Cooperating Schools Cable
St. Louis City TV 10
St. Peters St. Peters Cable
Springfield MediaCom
Sullivan Fidelity Cable
West Plains OCTV



Great Horned Owl

With prominent ear tufts and a height of approximately 22 inches, the great horned owl is easy to identify. Look for them in most habitats throughout the state—from rural to urban. —*Jim Rathert*



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